

**GEAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

**Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board**

**13244 Ravenna Road
Chardon, Ohio 44024**

**Christine Lakomiak
Executive Director**

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Board Minutes

January 28, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Reba Dykes, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Douglas Lundblad, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Ruth Shumway, Patricia Varanese

STAFF PRESENT: Christine Lakomiak, Jim Mausser, Michelle Maneage, Teresa Slater

GUESTS: Melanie Blasko (Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers), Kathy Franz (Geauga League of Women Voters), Paul Bolino, Vicki Clark (Ravenwood Health), Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe), Dianne Kellogg (Red Tulip), Lee and Linda Miller (Geauga residents), Mary Wynne-Peaspanen (Signature Health), Angela Daugherty (Family Pride), Brandon Lichtinger (Geauga Maple Leaf), Tia Lawrence (Torchlight)

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mr. Holden called the roll for attendance, and the following Board members were present: Reba Dykes, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Douglas Lundblad, Steven Oluic, and Michael Petruziello. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 19, 2025

Mr. Holden moved to waive the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

VOICE VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic welcomed everyone and reported the following:

- The community will lose two key members through retirement – Vicki Clark, CEO of Ravenwood Health, and Melanie Blasko, CEO of Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers.

- **Federal Funding Cut:** Despite the fact that the \$2 billion dollars was ultimately reinstated, this serves as a wakeup call that mental health and addiction funding will be viewed under a microscope. The cuts to SAMHSA funding occurred with no advance warning and would have dramatically impacted our behavioral health system. Boards and agencies should have a contingency plan in place should this happen again.
- **The Transitional Living Center ribbon cutting** will tentatively be in March. The Board will have achieved a major goal once this project is complete.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Lakomiak provided the following updates:

Statewide -

Recovery Housing: When recovery houses first started, there were no certification standards and many facilities were opened by individuals without credentials. Ohio now has guidelines for recovery housing through Ohio Recovery Housing. A facility must be licensed by the state and operated by individuals with the proper certifications. Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers was one of the first recovery houses to be certified. Local boards will be notified of violations and/or complaints when a recovery house is operating below standards.

Local -

988 Mini Grant: A grant in the amount of \$4,781 was received from the Board Association. The money was used to purchase posters, stress balls, totes, and wrist bands for students.

Attorney General's Office Remediation Grant: Staff worked with the Geauga Sheriff's Office to put together an application for these funds. As a result, the Sheriff received an award of \$149,088. The money will be used for Sublocade injections, Naltrexone, and a Jail Services Coordinator position. Interviews for the Jail Services Coordinator position began the week of January 26 and Director Lakomiak will be a part of choosing who fills this position. The person hired will be an employee of the Geauga Sheriff's Office.

Health Officer Appointments: A total of 41 Geauga County Health Officers were approved for the time frame of January 2026 to January 2028. Health Officers have the authority to pink slip individuals who need to be hospitalized involuntarily. Health Officers receive training by Ravenwood Health in conjunction with the Board.

Crisis Intervention Training: The sequential mapping process identified the need for a condensed version of this training for the community and providers. The condensed version of the 40-hour training for responders was offered; it was hosted by the Geauga Common Pleas Court for their staff. Attendees also included representatives from Harriet Tubman Movement, Job and Family Services, Department on Aging, Educational Service Center of NEO and Torchlight volunteers.

Mutual Aid Agreement: The Board entered into an agreement with Geauga Public Health to establish coordinated resource sharing during emergencies and disasters in regard to behavioral health.

120-Day Notice to Agencies: Legislative changes were made to ORC 340 which included different roles and responsibilities regarding service contracts. The Board must still give agencies a 120-day notice in March this year. Moving forward, the time frame changes to 60 days' notice for boards and agencies for non-renewal or termination of contracts. Additionally, allocations are not required to be made by the Request for Proposal process. Other ways this can be accomplished includes issuing a request for information, or continuing existing contracts. The Board can also review agency budgets and ask for additional information. The new contract language is being reviewed by the Prosecutor's Office. The Board will need to decide next month how to move forward with contracting.

Agency reviews: Fiscal, clinical, waitlist, needs, and achievement reviews are completed. Outcome measurements will be highlighted at the March meeting.

Suicides/Overdoses: There were no suicides/overdoses in December. Unfortunately, there was a suicide recently that the crisis team responded to in January.

Local Agencies: At a recent meeting, the Geauga County Township Association highlighted several local nonprofits – Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance, Ravenwood Health, Lifeline, and the Loss Team.

V. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution 26-01-1 Additional Allocation for SFY2026 Residential

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion.

Discussion: The allocation represents additional funds set aside for individuals placed outside of the county when the TLC is not an option or is full. Mr. Petruziello asked if this is enough to keep the person housed before there is an opening in Geauga. Director Lakomiak said the funds will cover 30 days and the recent request for an additional 30 days, and that it will cover what is needed for this client. It was noted that there are many moving parts, including a recent insurance application, but the most important consideration is what is best clinically for the client. This particular situation highlights the Board's role in helping a vulnerable population in Geauga.
ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

B. Resolution 26-01-2 Acknowledgement of County Budget for Calendar Year 2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion.

Discussion: The Board must develop two budgets – one based on a fiscal year and a second based on a calendar year. The step of acknowledging review of these budgets is a requirement of the certification process.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

C. Resolution 26-01-3 Ravenwood Health Budget Shortfall Request

Ms. Johnson moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Holden seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ravenwood Health applied to the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health for FY26 SOS No Cost Extension 4.0 grant funding in the amount of \$479,750.00; they were not awarded any funds. This created a funding shortfall for Medication Assisted Treatment and other programs. The funds allocated by the Board will only be used for the cost of medication, not for staffing. Ravenwood will also be requesting funds from One Ohio.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

D. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser reported on the following for November/December 2025:

- 47.2% of the Board's SFY2026 administrative budget has been expended.
- Geauga County calendar year expenses through December were just over \$8.84 million.
- The Auditor's Fund Balance at the end of December was just over \$2.44 million.
- Voucher Recap #713 for November: \$549,155.27.
- Voucher Recap #714 for December: \$857,369.31.

The December voucher was substantially higher than November's amount due to a large payment to Millstone for the Transitional Living Center. Chairman Oluic asked if Mr. Mausser has heard any further discussion about property taxes and organizations that have levies. Mr. Mausser responded that the county had a substantial carryover and the Commissioners are looking at different ways to return money to taxpayers. Commissioners recently decided to hold collection of a levy for Job and Family Services and use inside millage to meet their funding needs. The Financial Reports show an expenditure of \$450,000 which represents funds that were transferred from Capital Reserves for the TLC. These funds will be replenished when ODBH provides reimbursement.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Sign Update: The land clearing has occurred, the permit is complete, drawings are done, and the sign is going to production. The current timeline is 4-12 weeks dependent upon any manufacturing delays that may occur.

988 Park Signs: Examples of the 988 signs created by a local company were on display during the meeting. Munson, Chardon and Geauga Parks will be installing the signs in their park areas. Director Lakomiak will be speaking to trustees throughout the county about doing the same. It was suggested to also place the signs in cemeteries in order to assist individuals who are grieving and may be in distress. Mr. Lundblad said townships may be willing to put links on their websites as well.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Community Assessment and Plan (CAP)

Boards are statutorily required to assess their community to determine service gaps, develop priorities, put together strategic plans to meet those prioritized needs and report out on progress achieved.

Some noted information from the CAP includes:

- Men and seniors 60 and over are the populations at highest risk in Geauga, especially in relation to suicides.
- The Transitional Living Center is a Class I residential facility that is being expanded from 9 to 16 beds and will be used for Geauga County residents only; it will improve access and transition from the hospital; hold monthly coordination meetings; facilitate the transition to outpatient services; and explore jail-based competency restoration.
- Family First Council focuses on youth and families and establishing partnerships in the community to reduce barriers; making sure supports are available for high risk families; and ensuring respite for providers.
- Community assets include collaboration among agencies, and providers, to promote coordinated care, reduce service gaps, and share best practices. Community partnerships expand the reach of behavioral health programs and help connect individuals and families to needed services. Wellness programs and faith-based groups also further enhance a supportive environment. In addition, the Board has established a Memorandum of Understanding with Geauga Public Health and UH Geauga Medical Center in order to better serve residents.
- Key strategies include suicide awareness, 988 promotion, youth campaign for drug misuse, SUD treatment, workforce recruitment, medication assisted treatment, jail-based services, crisis services, mobile response teams, harm reduction, naloxone access, trainings for community, recovery supports, collaboration with the criminal justice system, JFS, FFC and other supports if needed.

The CAP, as submitted, will put the Board in compliance with state requirements. Chairman Oluic and Director Lakomiak will sign on behalf of the Board and the CAP will be submitted to the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health. Chairman Oluic said the CAP is a summary of what has taken place, and shows we are making significant improvements in the county. He is greatly appreciative of the Board's interactions with its community partners. Ms. Johnson moved to

acknowledge submission of Geauga’s Community Assessment and Plan. Ms. Dykes seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vicki Clark, CEO of Ravenwood Health, is retiring effective February 2, 2026. She spoke of her more than 30 years at Ravenwood and feels very blessed to have worked in this community. She thanked everyone present for their contributions to the system of care in Geauga County.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER THE COMPENSATION OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE OR OFFICIAL PURSUANT TO ORC 121.22(G)(1)

Mr. Holden moved to go into Executive Session for the above stated purpose. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion.

VOICE VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

The Board went into Executive Session at 6:55 PM. The Board came out of the Executive Session and returned to the Regular Session at 7:25 PM. Ms. Johnson moved to approve a 3% pay raise for Executive Director Christine Lakomiak retroactive to January 1, 2026. Ms. Dykes seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

Chairman Oluic reported that staff compensation will be discussed further, at a later date. Director Lakomiak will then present any recommendations to the Board.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Holden moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 PM.

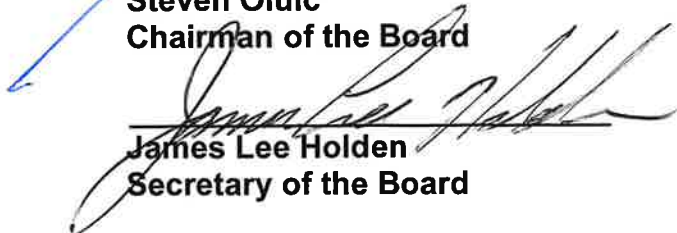
Respectfully submitted by:



**Teresa Slater
Administrative/Office Manager**



**Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board**



**James Lee Holden
Secretary of the Board**